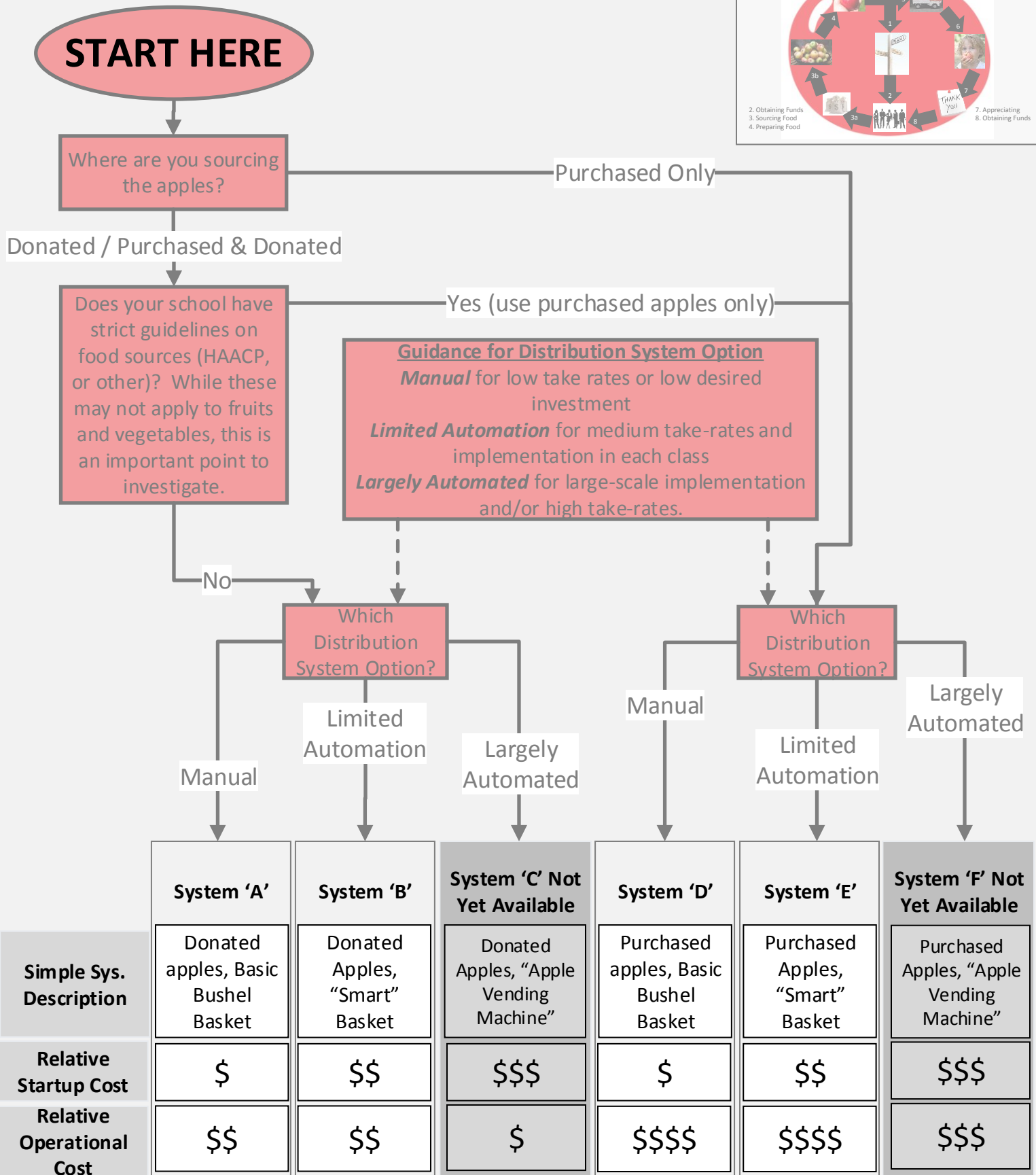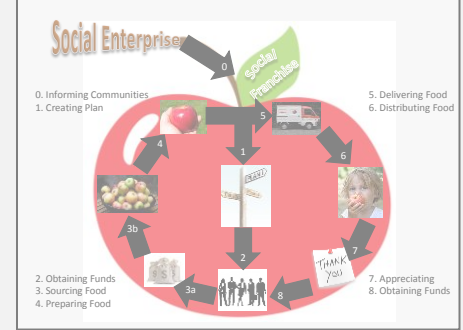# HOW SHOULD I SET UP THE APPLE-O-MATIC SYSTEM?

A HANDY FLOWCHART TO HELP YOU DECIDE

INSTRUCTIONS: Follow the flowchart to a potential solution at the bottom of the page. Find the reference material for that solution in the system manual.

Social Enterprise

0. Informing Communities
1. Creating Plan
2. Obtaining Funds
3. Sourcing Food
4. Preparing Food
5. Delivering Food
6. Distributing Food
7. Appreciating
8. Obtaining Funds

START HERE

Where are you sourcing the apples?

— Purchased Only →

Donated / Purchased & Donated

Does your school have strict guidelines on food sources (HAACP, or other)? While these may not apply to fruits and vegetables, this is an important point to investigate.

— Yes (use purchased apples only) →

Guidance for Distribution System Option
Manual for low take rates or low desired investment
Limited Automation for medium take-rates and implementation in each class
Largely Automated for large-scale implementation and/or high take-rates.

No →

Which Distribution System Option?

Manual / Limited Automation / Largely Automated

Which Distribution System Option?

Manual / Limited Automation / Largely Automated

	System 'A'	System 'B'	System 'C' Not Yet Available	System 'D'	System 'E'	System 'F' Not Yet Available
Simple Sys. Description	Donated apples, Basic Bushel Basket	Donated Apples, "Smart" Basket	Donated Apples, "Apple Vending Machine"	Purchased apples, Basic Bushel Basket	Purchased Apples, "Smart" Basket	Purchased Apples, "Apple Vending Machine"
Relative Startup Cost	$	$$	$$$	$	$$	$$$
Relative Operational Cost	$$	$$	$	$$$$	$$$$	$$$

Recipe_A Operational Plan: Donated apples, Basic Bushel Basket

Step 1: Creating a Plan

A. Project sponsor is to identify and define the need. If you've come this far, you have likely already identified the need (specific school, district, grade, etc.).

B. Once you have this identified, visit our "Apple-o-Matic" flowchart to choose review the recipe options, and pick one that most suits your needs (the "recipe" you're reading now is one of those options). Also, use the Cash Flow Sheet (provided) to make estimates for needed startup and ongoing funds required. Make sure that your funding sources can continue to provide funding at the needed levels (and use this to set the scope of your donor network.

C. Communicate the plan to your high-level stakeholders (school administration, teachers, etc.)

Step 2: Obtaining Funds

A. Identify your donors. Understand their needs; what motivates them? How do they like to donate?

B. Write a motivating message that explains the end goals of the project (feeding apples to children), explains the mechanism (the Apple-o-Matic service), and explains what you need from them (how much, how often; financial, labor, apples, etc.). Be specific in your needs (e.g. – we need xx people to deliver yy dollars on a weekly ongoing basis). Make sure that the expectations are known. In this particular solution, we'll be asking the donors to also help donate apples (can be from their backyard, the grocery store, etc.). Set expectations for quality/cleanliness of apples (as this affects workload and expense when the apples are brought into the system.

C. Deliver the message. Use a medium that makes the most sense for your donors (P.T.A. meetings, email, twitter, snail mail, etc.); this should be part of what you discovered in part 'A'.

D. Receive funding. Set up a bank account to deposit the funds. If you're interested in crowd-sourcing the donations, investigate "TinBox" as a resource to support this. Additionally, investigate grants (public and private) to support ongoing funding, as well as initial start-up money. Use the cash-flow sheet (from Step 1) to guide this effort.

Step 3: Sourcing Food

Recipes A, B & C all involve some level of apple donations from your donor network. This is a great hands-on opportunity for your donors, and really reduces operating cost (apples are over 50% of the operating cost of the system), but can also add some additional complications and questions. You will likely need to obtain apples from other sources in the off-season, and the delivery of the donated apples is likely to be irregular (requiring trips to the grocery store to make up the difference on short notice). Make sure you consider this in your implementation. Also be sure that you follow school and governmental regulations regarding bringing food into the school (cleanliness, safety, allergies, etc.). Reference HAACP regulations.

A. What are your sourcing options? Donors can provide apples from their backyards, or pick up an extra bag of apples when at the grocery store. Maybe their neighbors have too many trees, and they would be willing to donate that extras? Make sure your requests are known to your donor network (Step 2 above). Will you operate the service in the off-season? If so, where will you get the apples? Continued donations, or from the school cafeteria supplier?

B. How will you receive the food? Where will the donations be brought in and recorded? When and where? How often? Where will you store them? These questions need to be considered for donated and purchased apples.

C. How will you deliver them to the preparation site? Who is responsible for this? How are they compensated?

D. Be sure that the people involved in this step understand their roles and responsibilities, and give feedback to you on quantity of food brought in, quality issues, process issues, and any other system operation issues identified.

Feedback is important.

Step 4: Preparing Food

This step is very important, especially for your donated food. Apples sourced from traditional stores and school cafeteria supply network are likely already cleaned and sorted (but verify). The benefit of low cost food (donated apples) is partially offset by needing to spend more effort on this step. Consider engaging students in this step to understand the farm-to-school (or farm-to-table) process, and use this as an educational opportunity. You will likely also need other help to do this; this could be hired staff (which will affect your cash-flow) or volunteers.

A. Cull out the bad apples. Have an "apple purge" at regular intervals (don't keep any apple longer than xx weeks). Look for worm damage, spoilage, etc.

B. Sort the food; if you're receiving donations, you're going to get various varieties of apples, so give each class a good mix. Larger-sized apples can be sorted to older classes.

C. Wash the food. You have no idea where these apples have been and which chemicals they have been exposed to (another good opportunity to set expectations with your donor network), so be sure to wash them. Don't trust your donors to do this step for you outside of your control; YOU are responsible for this.

D. Package the food according to how it is distributed (large central site vs. class-by-class).

E. Again, feedback to the system administrator is important.

Step 5: Delivering Food

A. Transport the food to the distribution site(s). If there are large quantities of apples being delivered, make sure that the appropriate carts are being used (could be handling several hundred pounds of apples per day, depending on the size of the school, and frequency of distribution).

B. Clean the distribution system (purge 'old' apples, wipe down the distribution basket/machine). This is an important step in cleanliness. Inspect the distribution system for problems and report back.

C. Load the system (basket, machine, etc.) with new apples.

D. Feedback.

Step 6: Distributing Food

In this simple system, it is likely that the teacher will be responsible for distribution. They are the best ones to identify the appropriate time to distribute the apples, however research indicates that mid-afternoon (2pm?) is a good time for a healthy snack.

A. Identify the recipients. Is there a target audience? If not, general distribution is recommended (and easier to support).

B. Distribute the apples; this could be connected to educational information as well.

C. Consumption could be restricted until a different time, however there is less opportunity for damage to fruit and creating messes if the food is consumed immediately.

D. Feedback, Feedback, Feedback.

Step 7: Appreciating

One of the critical items in this system is the donors; this does not work without your donors (apples and/or monetary). Make sure you appreciate them appropriately.

A. Keep good records to understand who has donated into the system, and how much. Monetary donations are tax-deductible, and donors WILL EXPECT that you give them a tax receipt to deduct from their taxes. Donations of fruit may be tax deductible, but we recommend that the donor speaks with their tax advisor about how to handle this.

B. Determine how to appreciate them. A variety of methods works well at different times throughout the year (Twitter, email, handwritten letter, phone call, recognition from school administration & P.T.A, school newsletter). The important part is to make it personal. . . .if it's a canned message, they don't "appreciate" it as much.

C. Deliver the appreciation.